



Indiana State Board of Education

Room 229 State House
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2798

December 14, 2007

An Open Letter to Indiana Educators:

Soon you will be receiving, analyzing, and discussing ISTEP scores with students, parents, and colleagues. At the same time you will be making plans to assist students who need additional help in meeting ISTEP standards.

As you formulate remediation or assistance plans, please remember you are not constrained by state rules. State law allows local school boards to request waivers of curriculum and textbook statutes or State Board of Education rules dealing with curriculum and textbooks.

The State Board of Education welcomes innovative approaches that use the time within a school day in different ways or that award credit based on demonstrated proficiency instead of seat time. We understand once a student falls behind academically that is a major concern. Even though the student may make one year's progress every year, the student may still be behind at the normal end of the student's educational career. The answer may lie in the creative use of time and your talent. Board members believe you are best situated to determine and schedule the most effective use of instructional time. Board members also believe there is a great opportunity for educators in every curriculum area to help by demonstrating that their content area can contribute to students' literacy and math skills measured by ISTEP.

A request for waiver of a curriculum or textbook statute or rule is made by the local school board pursuant to a provision in a school improvement plan. While schools review their school improvement plans annually, a waiver request need not wait for an annual review. The State Board will accept an addendum to a plan at any time. Waiver requests will not be subjected to intense scrutiny. The Board will be satisfied if the school or corporation states the request has been made because staff believe students will be better served by the waiver.

The Board hopes one day waivers will not be necessary. Through the Board's Regulatory Reform Subcommittee, the Board is reviewing all State Board of Education rules. Some rules already have been allowed to expire. Other rules are scheduled to be eliminated or undergo significant revision. The goal is to get to the point where standards are clearly established, but the methods of achieving those standards are determined locally. In the meantime, however, the path to relief from regulation is best accomplished by requesting a waiver. Waiver requests should be submitted to the Division of Accreditation and Awards, Department of Education, Room 229 State House, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798; by fax to 317-233-6940; or by e-mail attachment to innovate@doe.in.gov. For assistance, please contact the division at 800-894-4044 or 317-232-9060.

Sincerely,

The Members of the State Board of Education